VILA RECÔNCAVO

[The Private Plantation]

côncavo. So far only the pai adão has been able to fulfill the plowing requirements. Lately, however, tractors with caterpillar tread have been introduced and, when used carefully with disk plows, have given excellent results. But the old standby is still commonly in use, hitched to eight, ten, twelve, or as many as twenty oxen.

The owner's house with its park stands on a small hilltop and is visible from afar because of its imperial palms. Nearby, on another hilltop, is the settlement of workers, a long street with houses on either side, the barracks, a small store, and the ever-present casa de farinha, the house where manioc is always being ground, pressed, and roasted to make the farina which is the staple food of the area. Also on this street is the overseer's house, which stands out from the others because of its large size and its veranda. The houses of the workmen are small and built for the most part under one long, common roof. Each house is really an apartment consisting of a front living room and a long corridor going back to the kitchen, with one or two bedrooms leading off the corridor. Other houses, under separate roofs, have similar interior arrangements. The roofs are of red tiles, the rest of the house of clay mud (taipa) slapped on both sides of a bamboo framework. After the mud has dried a coat of whitewash is applied. The houses are built and kept in repair by the plantation owner and do not belong to the workers. The floors are of beaten earth, difficult to keep clean. At night, when only a tiny oil lamp is burning, the houses look dark and gloomy.

After dark one has the impression of hearing much more than one can see. Kerosene is expensive to burn, no one reads, and most of life is geared to doing in the daytime those tasks which require light. At night the workmen and their families sit in the dark talking, or perhaps go to the casa de farinha where a fellow workman and his family may be grinding their manioc. This building is softly lit with kerosene lamps and there is a cheerful glow from the roasting fire. More recently the overseer's house has been equipped with electricity, and now it is always well lighted at night. His new radio has become a center of attraction and small groups form about his veranda, listening. At the other end of the street, during harvest time, there is always a bonfire in front of the barracks where the migrant workers are sheltered. On special occasions there may be a samba (dance), perhaps in the plantation owner's house. Then everyone dons his best and the

[The Private Plantation]

*249 ●517 535 534 273 *249 463 [221] *249 463 159

Then everyone dons his best and the women dance while the men play the drums, tambourines, and cavaquinhos (a ukelelelike instrument) or simply stand around watching, gossiping and "passing the branquinha" (the local white rum).

There is a hierarchy of personnel on the plantation, which starts with the owner, Dona Sinhá, and her family. On other plantations the owner is also sometimes a lawyer, doctor, or engineer whose main interests, both economic and social, are in the city of Salvador. This is not always the case, however, for many owners are only rural proprietors, as is Dona Sinhá. But it is always considered a sacrifice to be obliged to spend the winter on one's plantation. It has been a traditional prerogative of the plantation master to spend the winter in the city, and it is one of the traditions kept up today by the planters. However, as soon as the rains show signs of abating in August or September, Dona Sinhá appears on the scene, generally grateful for her release from the city and from the round of anniversaries, parties, and official functions she feels called upon to attend while there.

This aspect of partial absenteeism has given rise to the next rung in the hierarchical ladder: the overseer. As such he is a relatively new phenomenon, but he has actually been part of the scene for a long time. At the time of the engenho, the feitor-mor, or head foreman, frequently occupied the place of today's overseer. Seu Paulo is the focal point for most activities on Fazenda das Moças. It is he who puts into action Dona Sinhá's plans, for he has the greatest contact with the workers in the fields and at home, on the arruado (the street on which the houses are located). During the time Dona Sinhá is away he is ruler of the plantation (dono da terra).

Seu Paulo rose from the workers' ranks; he is familiar with all aspects of sugar-cane cultivation, and is able to handle men and to deal with the owner as well as with the workers. He is a dark mulatto, about forty-six years old, with a large family. He is sought after by the workers as godfather to their children. He rents a small piece of land on which he raises his own sugar cane. He has his own burros, oxen, and carts, which he rents to Dona Sinhá during the harvest season. Although unable to read or write, he can do figures in his head in an astounding fashion. He dresses well, in what is sometimes thought to be an attempt to imitate the plantation master of bygone days, while Dona Sinhá and her family have adopted a more comfortable garb for the country--"modo ameri-

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ter) and homens de côr (men of color) including a few pretos (blacks).

Most individuals in this class are conscious of their "superiority" over the bulk of the town population, because of their higher economic status, the kind of work they do (usually white-collar), their better educations, better family traditions, and whiter, or at least lighter, skins. They are conscious of the fact that they are at the top of the scale on the local scene, and that to go any higher is impossible in the town. To do this they would have to move to a city. If one had a special ability he might be able to improve his condition in a large city, but he might also remain unrecognized. In the town he is the "big frog in the little pond," and this seems to give a certain amount of satisfaction to many.

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People of Class B seek to maintain favorable relations with the rural landowners, who dispense the municipal patronage and have the contacts in Salvador necessary to influence federal and state appointments, since members of their families are frequently state and federal government representatives. Only the merchants of Class B are in a relatively independent position, for they can operate independently of politics. Their market is the town population and is in no way dependent upon trade or patronage from the planters or their workers. There are no traditional merchant families in Vila Recôncavo. All contemporary storekeepers are persons who have worked their way up from fishing or some other activity to storekeeping.

565* 441

565* 183

This class is slowly growing, and there are certain standards to which all its members conform, such as living in the old part of town, dressing with more care than the lower classes, supporting the church and patronizing the few religious holiday celebrations, sending their children to Salvador for their secondary education, owning radios, good dishes and furniture, displaying family solidarity and good manners, and maintaining a good relationship with members of Class A. But there is little or no cohesion among members of the group. They seldom act as a unit or express a group opinion (except to condemn candomblé, the local variation of African cultism).

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The social life of these people is definitely limited and to some extent follows the same pattern as that of the rural members of the same class, in that the men go out more than do their wives. The women of this group remain at home most

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517 of the time, visiting little and receiving the local gossip from
[546] their servants. Since the advent of movies, however, it has
become fashionable for husband and wife and sometimes the
[541] children to attend the show together. When the circus comes
to town it is now common for them to go as a family at least
[794] once. As a rule, however, church services are attended sep-
arately, the wives and daughters going together and the men
singly if at all, and standing in the back rather than sitting
[574] with the family. Dinners, card parties, or social gatherings
with friends in the house, such as are common to North Amer-
ican small towns, do not exist here at all. About the only trav-
eling these people do is to Salvador, where they stay with rel-
atives while they make short visits, go to the doctor, or go
shopping.

*565 Even the older members of Class B are less well educated
871 than those of Class A, and do not belong to families which are
nationally prominent. In many cases they have relatives in
Salvador, but in no case do they maintain a second home there.
Although their children may go to primary school in Vila Re-
côncavo, which the children of Class A would never do, they
are sent to Salvador for further education; and several of the
present generation are studying for degrees in law and med-
*565 icine. As has already been pointed out, this class engages in
[571] little social activity in common with Class A, and in almost
none with rural Class B persons. Daughters of families be-
[867] longing to this class are carefully chaperoned and have little
freedom. Their lives are spent at home, sewing, embroidering,
[582] and helping their mothers in the house. Their prospects for
marriage are poor. This applies also to the schoolteachers
*565 who are sent to the town and who also belong to this class.
582 There is little opportunity for them to marry in Vila Recôn-
875 cavo unless they accept a social inferior, which commonly
happens to rural schoolteachers in Brazil. "Felipe," as the
schoolteacher's husband is generally known, is always a "no-
good" supported by his wife. There are two cases in Vila Re-
côncavo of local upper-class wives who work--they are both
schoolteachers, supplementing their husbands' incomes and
* alleviating the dullness of their lives.
565 Class C in the rural area consists of the field hands and the
factory workers, who constitute the major part of the pop-
ulation. There are no "pure whites" in this group, but a scat-
[184] tering of "whites of the land." In general the factory workers
consider themselves superior to the agricultural laborers;

2: Hutchinson E-4,5 (1950-1951) 1957 SO11 Bahia Brazilians SO11
VILA RECÔNCAVO

they are generally conceded to be so by the field hands and the members of classes A and B, because their occupations are more specialized and they work in the mill. There are actually several factors which distinguish them from the field laborers, for in addition to receiving protection by national legislation, including minimum salaries and rights to vacations and medical services, they receive from the factory electric light for their houses and firewood. In addition, factory workers do not plant gardens to supply their farina, and they consider themselves far superior to the agricultural laborers in that their own wives "do not use the hoe" (nao pegam na enxada).

At the factory nucleus where both millworkers and the agricultural laborers of one plantation live in the same place, the houses of the former are grouped in the middle of the village, clustered about the owner's chalet, while those of the latter are on the fringes, farther from the usineiro's house, the mill, and the large store. The factory workers' houses are better constructed than those of the field laborers. They are mostly of brick with tile roofs, while the field workers' homes are often of wattle-work covered with plaster and painted over. The houses of the factory nucleus follow the old slavequarter pattern. The buildings are long and narrow and divided into apartments under one roof. The factory owns all the houses, which the workers receive rent-free. The factory worker is better paid than the field worker, and consequently has more and better material possessions. His house is better furnished, and he dresses better.

Illiteracy is widespread in the rural area. The factory nucleus has had a state primary school for thirty years, and Pedras, the largest of the factory plantations, has had one for about twenty. As a result the factory workers, as well as the people of Pedras, have had the opportunity to attend four years of primary school. The rural laborers on other plantations, however, have lacked this opportunity in most cases. An exception is the Fazenda das Moças, which has had a school in recent years, for children in the daytime and for adults at night.

The social life of the workers is almost entirely confined to the place in which they live. Their lives are spent on the plantation except for the days when they walk to the fair in Centro, usually on the Monday following payday. During the summer, when the roads are good for travel, they are busy with the

565* 184 [656] [466] [361] 565* 342 184 [423] 565* 184 871 [212] 565* 517

harvesting and milling. The factory operates twenty-four hours a day during this season. In the winter, when they have more leisure, travel is too difficult, for the roads disappear in mud. Few of the rural people go to the town of Vila Recôncavo, for it has nothing to attract them except the boat to Salvador and the priest, whom they sometimes visit to have a Mass said or for a burial. The free movies recently innovated by the Petroleum Council and located a mile from the factory have been a boon to the rural people, but as a rule only the men attend. In fact, almost any kind of off-plantation gathering is attended predominantly by men.

On most plantations the casa de farinha is a social gathering place, and both males and females congregate there to talk about the latest news while they work. The women also gossip at the local well as they fetch water or remain there washing their clothes. Their everyday lives are busy, and there is little time for purely social activities. The day begins and ends early. Soon after dark the lights go out, the houses close, and silence reigns except for the noise coming from the casa de farinha, which may operate all night, or the lonesome singing of the caatingueiros housed in the barracks, or the strong rhythmic sound of the drums coming from a distant candomblé ceremony. Because there is little work for women on a plantation, the "extra" girls, those for whom there are no potential husbands, ask the planter to get them work as domestics in the city; this is usually easy, for there is nearly always someone in Salvador looking for a "good, strong country girl" to work in the home. Occasionally, if a worker's son is especially intelligent and industrious, he too may be placed in some position in the city.

Class C comprises the majority of the population in the town of Vila Recôncavo and includes most of the occupations listed in Group 3 of the preceding chapter--that is, fishermen, gardeners, and artisans. There are no "pure whites" in this class, but, as in the rural area, a few "whites of the land" and the full range of mestiços, whose various color and social characteristics will be discussed later. The people of Class C live for the most part in the lower section of town, in the areas called Cortume, Largo de Santa Cruz, Rua Nova, Boqueirão, Cumbamba, and Caquende. The great majority of them own their homes, although the land belongs to the Fazenda Engenho da Vila, to the church, or to the prefeitura, and is rented for a small yearly sum. The houses are small, usually

2: Hutchinson E-4, 5 (1950-1951) 1957 5011 Bahia Brazilians 5011

VILA RECONCAVO

[Class A Families]

in the three houses for nearly all members of the two extended families, for the factory has become the major gathering point for all of them during the summer. Each married couple maintains its own home in the city. In the Conde and Jacuipe families the tendency has been to enlarge the two families by the addition of in-laws rather than to lose sons and daughters, because of the exceptionally strong family loyalties held by the members. As a result, many more people are drawn into the social circles of the two groups, which at times appear as one family and at other times as two separate but close units.

The social life of these people is carried out almost entirely within this group of ninety-seven persons, and their in-laws, plus the in-law families. Such intrafamilial social life is known as vida em familia. During the winter season in Salvador, their social activities are confined to visiting one another, playing cards with one another, having birthday parties for one another, attending the weddings of one another's children, and so forth. Trips to the beach and to social clubs and graduations are made jointly. During the summer, parts of families visit others, and at certain times, such as the botada da usina (first day of the sugar mill's activities each year), Carnaval, and the birthday of the Colonel, his wife, or Dona Yaya, nearly all the members of the family get together. This may mean a gathering of sixty to seventy persons. A "small" luncheon may be attended by a mere twenty or thirty persons.

It is still the custom for young married couples to dine with the parents of each at least once a week. It is also not unusual to find an entire apartment house in the city occupied by members of one family, each conjugal group occupying its own apartment. Members of the same generation usually play or visit together, although all generations are present at most family gatherings. Through lifelong companionship, members of families in this class come to know each other extremely well and are often the best of friends as well as relatives. Because of the size of these families, and because of the constancy of their devotion to one another, there is little time or energy left for entertaining outsiders. This, however, does not mean that acquaintances are limited to family members. Friends are made, who are drawn into the various conjugal groups and into the activities of the larger extended family.

Courtship in Class A families is a formal affair. At first it is considered that the young couple are gostando (liking each other) or namorando (in love). It is expected that the boy

21 Hutchinson E-4,5 (1950-1951) 1957 SO11 Bahia Brazilians SO11
VILA RECÔNCAVO



capacities, or they are "newly arrived" socially, which often indicates that the relatives of either or both spouses may belong to the lower class; in this case the local upper-class families are inclined to ignore them. In these conjugal families the husband is the central figure, participating in business and social activities of the town, while his wife and children, especially daughters, remain at home. The sons usually go to the city to school and remain there after graduation, so there is little chance of continuing a strong family line in the town. At the factory the case is somewhat different, for the sons of Class B families may enter the factory in one of the higher office positions, thus forming a larger family group as they marry and settle down there. This pattern, however, is only apparent in the second generation, and there are only three cases of it.

As a result of the lack of public entertainment in Vila Recôncavo and the competitive attitude of members of Class B among themselves and toward the higher members of Class C, there is little social gathering, especially for the women. There are never extended family gatherings for Class B such as those described for Class A. The men go to the bar or visit one another's homes to some slight extent, but wives and daughters seldom do. The wives are kept occupied bearing children and caring for them. Those few daughters who are sent to school in the city are indeed fortunate, for their chances of marrying and remaining in Salvador, the desire of most young people, are greatest. The summer vacation is boring to them in comparison with their scope of activities in the winter. The sons can enjoy the summer, going swimming, horseback riding, playing ball, making the most of the few parties and festivals (festas) which take place during the summer, lounging in the bar gossiping, meeting the boat, and visiting lower-class girls. The daughters, on the other hand, can do nothing of the sort. They spend their time at home with their mothers and sometimes visit a married girl friend or sister to gossip.

For those girls who remain in the town, life can be intolerably dull. They must be extremely careful of where they go, when, and with whom, and of what they do, for the town gossip about them can be vicious. The reputation of a girl seen on the street at night without one of her parents is ruined. These girls are expected to be virgins, models of propriety,

[Class B Families]

and the social forces compelling them to conform to this ideal are strong enough to keep them at home.

To some extent the Class B families take as their pattern the older traditions of the upper-class families. The father is the most important person in the home and has the final word in all decisions. His wife is not his equal in a social sense and plays a much more passive role than the women of classes A, C, and D. This, however, is slowly changing, for married couples of the younger generation are beginning to share more activities, such as going to the movies, visiting friends, or going on short trips to Salvador. But this is a recent development and applies only to four couples in the town. The others still maintain the old pattern whereby the man attends social functions while his wife remains home. On occasion of a farewell party, invitations were carefully extended to the married couples in Class B at the author's instigation. Of the thirteen couples invited, only four came together. In the other cases only the husbands came. Among the others, one of the husbands was away, and his wife would not come to the party even though her mother, father, and two sisters did. It is still common for the wife either to remain discreetly silent or to disappear altogether when her husband has visitors at home, and among the older families the father and his guests are served separately at meals, the women of the household eating afterwards alone.

Family life in rural Class B follows to some extent that of the town family of the same class. The father is the central figure in the family and makes all decisions. He travels about the community while his wife remains at home. The sons of overseers, however, are seldom sent to Salvador to school, although the sons of Class B families living at the factory usually are, at least for a short time. So far, however, none of them has entered a profession.

As has already been stated, the women of rural Class B lead much the same kind of life as the women in Class C, with whom they associate. Daughters are guarded carefully, while sons are placed in some advantageous position whenever possible, frequently through the aid of the plantation owner or usineiro. They may enter the factory office, and in several cases they have been set up in business on the plantations, running small stores which belong to their fathers.

A daughter of Seu Paulo, the overseer of the Fazenda das Moças, married the son of the overseer on a neighboring

[Class C Families]

(tamancos), or perhaps leather shoes. Women wear a dress and a slip and are usually barefoot. Dress-up occasions also call for undergarments, stockings, and shoes. Great modesty is always shown about exposing oneself in front of others. Few of the men shave themselves, going to the barber for this as well as for haircuts. There are several women who are experts at hair straightening, which they do with a flat-iron, although most women and girls in this class who have the problem of straightening their hair know how to do it themselves.

In Class C as well as in Class B the father is the dominant person. He rules the household. He is the one who is served at meals, whose clothing is always clean and pressed, and who goes out the most. He spends much of his leisure time in one of the several stores, talking and taking an occasional drink of rum; or on one of the few shaded corners playing dominoes with his friends; or else in the bar playing billiards and gossiping. As a rule he goes to the movies alone, or at least without his family, although in the higher echelons of the class families often go to the movies and to church together. There is one family which is musically inclined, and which often spends evenings at home together, making up a small orchestra. If there is a samba in someone's house, many men from this class will be there watching, while the participants are usually single women and girls from the same class. The men will discuss a woman's physical attributes while she is in the center of the ring dancing. This is one of the most common ways in which a girl gets "looked over" and is watched as she develops. Sooner or later some man will fall in love with her (apaixonar-se dela), and if she is not well guarded by her family he will eventually have an affair with her. In the case of fishermen, most of the time is taken up either by fishing or by caring for equipment, for the nets need a good deal of attention. Since the fishermen's hours follow the tides, their working hours differ from day to day. They often go to bed early, in anticipation of getting up at three or four in the morning.

The women, on the other hand, follow a more regular daily routine of getting the morning coffee ready, getting the children off to school, going for water and wood, doing the ever-present laundry and ironing, and caring for the younger children. In addition, if possible, they prepare xangô to help supplement the family income and go to the fair in Centro on Mon-

2: Hutchinson E-4, 6 (1950-1951) 1957 SO11 Bahia Brazilians SO11

VILA RECÔNCAVO

the lower classes fail to have at least some knowledge of the ceremonial. In a region where there is little entertainment, such as in the town of Vila Recôncavo and especially in the rural area, the cults provide a major spectator activity, and those who have been exposed to it through their lives appreciate it as such. The number of active participants, however, is small. The house which is functioning in the town has about two dozen initiates, while the rural house is somewhat larger, having about forty-five devotees, only seven of whom are drawn from the plantation on which the house is situated. The rural house is more active for several reasons, according to local informants: the costumes are prettier, and therefore people prefer to dance there; the cult leader is a stronger personality and a better healer than the leader of the town house. The rural house is also more conveniently located for people from the surrounding plantations. Nevertheless, the small number of participants is indicative of the weakness of the institution in this area as a whole.

Healing, however, does play an important part in the cult activities, for the zelador who has "made his saint" has usually learned a large number of ritual and herbal cures. In fact, it is the healing aspect which brings most people to the cult activities. Sick persons, however, generally prefer to entrust themselves first to the ministrations of the plantation owner, plantation nurse, or town doctor. But if they feel they are not being helped, they turn to the cult house. If the sickness is diagnosed by the cult leader as a clear sign that the person is in contact with a spirit, the patient must enter the rites as an initiate or suffer the consequences. But for the ordinary run of headaches, stomach troubles, and skin eruptions, the cult leader draws upon his knowledge of herbal remedies. This knowledge is supposed to come from his deity, who often is St. Roch in this area, and who knows the cure. In fact, the leader of the rural house once compared his establishment with a pharmacy. He is paid for these medical services. Often one hears a person wishing that he could "have" such-and-such a saint so he would know how to cure and be able to make money, as do the cult leaders.

It is a general opinion that cult leaders are financially well off, although they themselves staunchly declare that they are not and that they must live from alms. As a rule all the participants in a house are obliged to contribute to the ceremonial honoring the leader's deity, which is usually the most extravagant ceremonial of the house.

4: Pierson Z-4, 5 (1935-1937) 1967
SOll Bahia Brazilians SOll

[City of Salvador]



363
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sirable as a seat of residence for one weary of the noises of an industrial city, but for the Bahian wife and daughters, whose world is still largely inside the doors of the home, these characteristics seem to give it a peculiar charm. Hence, one will see along this avenue, almost from Praça Castro Alves out, the residences of many substantial families and, in Vitoria, just beyond the governor's palace, the more pretentious dwellings of the upper class.

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TABLE 1

FAMILIES DWELLING ALONG THE AVENIDA SETE DE SETEMBRO CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO ETHNIC COMPOSITION, BAHIA, 1936

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| | Number | Per Cent |
|---|---|---|
| Black | 19 | 7.6 |
| Mixed-blood | 97 | 38.6 |
| White | 128 | 51.0 |
| Mixed-blood and white | 5 | 2.0 |
| Black and mixed-blood | 2 | 0.8 |
| Total | 251 | 100.0 |

125
563 *
796
[342]
[517] •

No Bahian house which boasts any pretension fails to have a balcony, while nearly all possess large casement windows opening out on the street. From this vantage point the family can while away many pleasant hours leaning on elbows and "watching the *gente* (people) go by." Consequently, one can readily gain, especially during the passage of processions when the balconies and windows are fully occupied, rather accurate information on the physical character of the population. It is possible at Carnival, for example, particularly just preceding the passage of the floats, to take a census with respect to racial composition, as far